

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS MARSEILLE 0106

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BARRE VISITS MARSEILLE

1. SUMMARY

THE PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSED A RALLYING POLITICAL SPEECH IN MARSEILLE YESTERDAY EVENING THAT WAS WELL ATTENDED, WELL DELIVERED, AND WELL RECEIVED. HIS CALL FOR HEAVY EFFORT TO AUGMENT THE VOTE FOR THE MAJORITE NEXT SUNDAY WAS PSYCHOLOGICALLY WELL TIMED AND NO DOUBT WILL FURTHER SPUR THE EFFORTS OF MAJORITE SUPPORTERS ALREADY ENCOURAGED BY LOCAL GAINS ACHIEVED IN LAST SUNDAY'S

2. PRIME MINISTER BARRE VISITED MARSEILLE BRIEFLY YESTERDAY TO PRESENT A POLITICAL RALLYING SPEECH WHICH DREW A HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD OF ABOUT 6000. SPEAKING FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR AT THE PALAIS DES CONGRES ON MARSEILLE'S FAIRGROUNDS, THE PM LAMBOSTED THE LEFT AND THE AGREEMENT REACHED ON MONDAY BY LEFTIST PARTY LEADERS. THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDED

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EVERY BLOW LOUDLY AND SPONTANEOUSLY.

3. BARRE SINGLED OUT MAIRE DEFFERRE FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION. REFERRING TO THE MAIRE'S EARLIER PUBLIC CHARACTERIZATION OF BARRE AS "JOLY THOUGH EMPTY" (PRUDHOMMESQUE ET D ETERNEL REJOUI), THE PRIME MINISTER RETORTED THAT THE MAIRE SHOULD REFLECT UPON THE FACT THAT M. PRUDHOMME WAS IN THE HABIT OF

SPEAKING TRUTHFULLY AND DIRECTLY WHICH WAS PRECISELY WHAT HE HAD DONE AND WOULD INDEED CONTINUE DOING. BARRE PRESSED HIS ATTACK FURTHER WITH CAUSTIC REFERENCE TO A REMARK ATTRIBUTED TO THE MAIRE LAST JANUARY, AND NOT SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED, THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PC TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY IN GOVERNMENT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL HAD BEEN WEAKENED BY THE RECURRING POOR PERFORMANCE AND NONCOOPERATION OF COMMUNIST CONSEILLIERS MUNICIPAUX.

4. THE PM REPEATED HIS APPEAL MADE EARLIER YESTERDAY AT LOUVIERS FOR SOCIALIST AND MRG VOTERS TO CHOOSE MAJORITE ON SUNDAY. HE WARNED THEM OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUPPORTING THE LEFT'S "HASTILY CONCOCTED AGREEMENT HEAVY WITH MASCARA."

5. THROUGHOUT HIS APPEARANCE BARRE WAS IN FINE FORM, SPOKE CONVINCINGLY, WITH RELISH, AND WITH PASSION, AND SHOWED NO SIGNS OF THE HEAVY PRESSURES ON HIM DURING THIS ELECTION PERIOD. HE RECOGNIZED INDIVIDUALLY THE DEPARTMENTAL CANDIDATES OF THE MAJORITE WHO WILL BE ON SUNDAY'S BALLOT, LAUDED THEIR EFFORTS, UPHELD THE OBJECTIVES OF HIS GOVERNMENT, AND ROUNDLY POUNDED THE ARGUMENTS AND PLAYS OF HIS ADVERSARIES USING ALL THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS. THE CROWD OFTEN GAVE HEAVY AND ANIMATED APPLAUSE, EVEN THOSE SEVERAL THOUSAND WHO COULD NOT GET INTO THE JAMMED HALL AND THUS HAD TO BE CONTENT TO LISTEN THROUGH LOUDSPEAKERS OUTSIDE THE BUILDING.
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5. COMMENT: THE PM'S VISIT WAS PSYCHOLOGICALLY WELL TIMED. LOCAL MAJORITE SUPPORTERS ARE ENCOURAGED BY SOME ADVANCES MADE BY THEIR FORCES IN LAST SUNDAY'S VOTE, AND BARRE'S SPEECH CAN ONLY ENHANCE THEIR DRIVE FOR EVEN GREATER GAINS IN THE FINAL VOTE ON SUNDAY. EVEN GASTON DEFFERRE, IN A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S PROVENCAL, RECOGNIZES A POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER MAJORITE INROADS ON THE LEFT. OBSERVING THAT OFFICIAL DATA GIVES 48.57 PER CENT OF LAST SUNDAY'S VOTES TO THE MAJORITE AND 46.46 PER CENT TO THE LEFT, HE WARNS THAT THE LEFT RISKS FINISHING THE ELECTIONS WITH A MINORITY OF DEPUTIES AND POSSIBLY EVEN FEWER THAN IT HAD GOING INTO THE ELECTION. THIS IS A PRETTY STRONG STATEMENT FOR HIM TO MAKE AT THIS POINT IN THE CAMPAIGN, EVEN CONSIDERING THAT IT WAS MEANT TO INCREASE SOCIALIST EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF ALL CANDIDATES ON THE LEFT, 8 OF WHICH ARE PC OUT OF 11 RUNNING IN THIS DEPARTMENT. EVEN SO, DEFFERRE'S EDITORIAL STOPPED SHORT OF ENDORSING SUPPORT FOR PC CANDIDATES SPECIFICALLY. DOES THAT SEASONED POLITICAL PRACTITIONER FAINTLY REFLECT SIMILAR, POSSIBLY GROWING FEELING OF DISCOMFORT FOR PC SUPPORT AMONG PS PARTISANS IN THE HEAVILY COMMUNIST SOUTH? IF SO, IT WOULD ACCORD WITH SIGNALS WE HAVE

BEEN GETTING FOR SOME TIME FROM MANY POINTS IN OUR DISTRICT:
IN A WEEK WE SHALL KNOW FOR CERTAIN. MEIMA

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